DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 747 FL 027 699

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TITLE	Second Language Teaching and Learning: The Nigerian Experience.
PUB DATE	2001-07-17
NOTE	15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association (Washington, DC, July 17, 2001).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Native Language Instruction; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; Uncommonly Taught Languages ; *Yoruba
IDENTIFIERS	*Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the second language teaching experience in Nigeria. It discusses mother tongues, official second languages, indigenous second languages, and foreign languages. It critically evaluates the Six Year Primary Project, a model study which examined the effectiveness of one Nigerian mother tongue, Yoruba, as a medium of instruction in Nigerian schools and colleges. It also evaluates the Communication Skills Project, which investigated how to best teach English in order to enhance the ability of Nigerian undergraduate students to receive and give information in English. This project ended up failing completely. Next, the paper explains why Nigerian languages, whether performing the role of mother tongue, second language, or foreign language, are not effective media for teaching and learning. Finally, it speculates on the possible trends in mother tongue and second language learning, research, and instruction, suggesting what should be done to facilitate the use of languages and second language learning, research, and instruction. (SM)

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SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Being the text of the paper presented at:
The International Reading Association Conference: "Investigating Second Language Research (North American Consultation)" in Washington DC USA.

Date: 17th July, 2001

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Second Language Research, Teaching and Learning: The Nigerian Experience

Introduction:

Nigeria with a population of well over one hundred and twenty million people has an interesting linguistic map that is very diverse. We can identify at least four factors that make for this diversity. First, there are over four hundred and fifty (450) indigenous languages that are used by at least five hundred ethnic groups in the country. Nigeria as a country of many nation-states came into being as a result of British colonial fiat. Each nation-state guards its ethnic language jealously. The linguistic map of Nigeria is therefore a microsm of the diverse ethnic groups that make up the country. Each language presents a unique feature of its position in the map. Second, there is the religious factor. For instance, Christianity that came into Nigeria in the late eighteen century brought with it English. English is used as the lingua franca among the Christian communities that are found mainly in the Southern and Middle Belt areas of the country. Furthermore, there is Islam. Muslim clerics from Western Sudan and North Africa brought Arabic into Nigerian. Arabic is the lingua franca of the Muslim communities in the Northern parts of Nigeria. Thus, in a sense from the religious point of view, Nigeria can be seen as consisting of two predominant languages. English is used by the Christians, who are found mainly in the Southern and Middle Belt areas of the country. Arabic is used by the Muslims though mainly by Muslim in the North Western and North Eastern parts of Nigeria. Third, there is the colonial factor. For instance, because of British colonial influence in Nigeria, English is the official language of the country and the medium of instruction in Nigerian schools and colleges. Besides, as the official language, English is the language of the judiciary, armed forces, the civil service, inter/intra ethnic communication and the language for international commerce and trade. Since Nigeria's neighbors are French speaking, French is becoming a language of great significance in the country. Its learning and teaching are being promoted in Nigeria in order to enhance communication between Nigeria and its French-speaking neighbors. Finally, because of the market potential in Nigeria, nationals from countries all over the world now flood Nigeria. To capitalize on the presence of such nationals, departments of modern languages are being set up in many Nigerian Universities. Thus, such languages as German, Spanish, Portuguese e.t.c are now being taught in Nigeria Universities.

From the above scenario, we can now characterize the Nigerian linguistic map as follows:

(i) Mother Tongues: These consist of the over 450 indigenous languages in the country.

(ii) Official Second Language: This refers to English, which is a second language to the generality of Nigerians who use it.

(iii) Indigenous Second Languages: These refer to other Nigerian languages in which Nigerians have considerable facility other than their mother tongues. Such languages can be some Nigerian indigenous languages or Arabic or French to which many Nigerians apart from their mother tongues have considerable facility.

iv) Foreign Languages: To many Nigerians, some Nigerian languages in which they do not have any competence in or have some limited

competence for communication are foreign. In addition, such languages as Russian, German, Spanish, and Portuguese etc, which are taught in some Nigerian tertiary institutions are foreign to Nigerians and even to some of those Nigerians who learn and use them.

Thus in this presentation the terms mother tongue and second language demand careful definitions and explanations. This is because given the linguistic map of Nigeria, what may be a second language to many Nigerians may be a mother tongue or a foreign language to others. For the purpose of this presentation, we will like to draw our mother tongue, second language and foreign language distinctions from Afolayan (1999)

Mother Tongue

1. The only language of a monolingual person, which meets all his linguistic needs.
2. Usually the sequentially first language of a bi-or multi-lingual person.
3. The language that fully identifies with the personal or native culture of a bi-or multi-lingual person.
4. The language in which a bi-or-multi-lingual person conducts his everyday activities and in which he has the greatest linguistic facility or intuitive knowledge.
5. The language, which has the socio-cultural functions of serving as the instrument of nationalism and nationism.
6. The language of which the recognized standard variety is the target model of the formal education system operative within its speech community.
7. The language, which, for the effectiveness of its functions, requires of the learner/user knowledge of all the four basic skills of listening, reading and writing.

Second Language

1. Usually the sequential second language of a bilingual person.
2. May or may not be the sequentially second language of experience of a multilingual person.
3. A language in which a bi-or multi-lingual person conducts part of his everyday activities, sharing this role with another language in which the person has greater linguistic facility or intuitive knowledge.

   (a)If foreign to the speech community of its adoption but native to the political unit subsuming the speech community (for example, the Igbo language, if adopted by the Yoruba-speaking Oyo State and by the Hausa-speaking Kano State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, or Ki-Swahili, which is adopted in several parts of Tanzania), it is a language that can have the socio-cultural function of serving as the instrument of nationism in a multilingual community or nation.

   (b)If foreign to both the speech community and the entire political unit subsuming all component speech communities of a multilingual community or nation of its adoption (such as English in Ghana and India, or French in Niger and Senegal, or Portuguese in Mozambique and Angola), it is the language which socio-culturally serves as an instrument of bilingualism and biculturalism on its user country or community,

usually of ex-colonial people of Africa, Asia or South America, and turning such communities into special second-language speech communities of the language. (This means that, politico-socio-economically, its previous role as the instrument of colonial administration makes it continue to serve not only as an official language but a one major language of formal education and administration of the community or nation. Also because of its colonial neutrality when placed among the competing local mother tongues, it tends to serve as the effective instrument of nationism in the multilingual/multicultural state).

4. That language which has its mother tongue standard variety modified by relevant local features in order to serve efficiently as the target model of the formal educational system operative within its speech community.
5. The language, which, for the effectiveness of its functions requires of the learner/user knowledge of all the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Foreign Language

1. Usually the sequentially second language of a bilingual person.
2. Could be the second, third, fourth or fifth language of experience of a multilingual person.
3. A language in which a bi-or multi-lingual person conducts only specialized activities and therefore, one in which he has only a partial linguistic facility or knowledge, possibly in only some of its four basic skills.
4. The language, which has the socio-cultural functions of serving as an instrument for voluntarily acquiring a new international culture.
5. The language, which has its mother tongue standard variety, particularly that standard variety recognised within the formal educational system of the donor or mother-tongue metropolis, as the target is sustainable national development, the suitability of each for optimal effectiveness and efficiency varies considerably. It is, therefore, appropriate to consider at this stage the degree of suitability of each of the three language varieties. (Afolayan, 1999:18-20).

In the rest of this paper, we shall attempt four things. First, we shall attempt a critical evaluation of the Six Year Primary Project (SYPP). SYPP is a model study, which tried to examine the effectiveness of a Nigerian mother tongue –Yoruba - as medium of instruction in Nigerian schools and colleges. Second, we shall also attempt a critical evaluation of the Communication Skills Project (COMSKIP). COMSKIP is a communication skills project in English, which tried to ascertain how best English, can be taught in order to enhance the ability of Nigerian undergraduates to receive and give information in English. Third, we shall try to explain why Nigerian languages whether they perform the role off mother tongue, second language or even foreign language are not effective media for learning and teaching. Finally, we shall try to speculate on the possible trends of mother tongue or second language learning, research and instruction. We shall also suggest what should be done in order to facilitate the use of languages in Nigeria for effective communication as media of instruction and for acculturation.

The Six-Year Primary Project

This project examined the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction for the Nigerian child whose mother tongue is Yoruba. The project was built on the basic assumption that a child's mother tongue is the most effective instrument for teaching the child, enhancing the child's creative and critical thinking, promoting the child's problem solving ability, facilitating the child's art of inquiry, information storage and retrieval and enabling the child to effectively relate to his/her environment, so that the child can understand its environment, domesticate it and maximally and optimally exploit its resources for his/her well being. As a matter of fact a fundamental assumption of the project is that the child's permanent literacy can best be acquired and sustained through the medium of the mother tongue. In Nigeria before the commencement of the SYPP, the mother tongue because of some historical antecedents was neglected as an instrument of learning and instruction for the Nigerian child. Generally, the average Nigerian had been brainwashed to believe that English is the only viable language of instruction. It was felt that a Nigerian mother tongue was grossly inadequate in teaching the natural sciences, social sciences and mathematics. Unfortunately, such British institutions like the British Council at that time believed that any learning and teaching without the medium of English was not desirable (Cook, 1994). Thus, unless there was ample empirical evidence to show that a mother tongue was a more effective medium of teaching the Nigerian child and of course unless the empirical evidence was beyond reasonable doubts, there was no way a Nigerian mother tongue could ever be used as a medium of instruction in Nigeria schools and colleges.

More specifically according to Afolayan (1999), the SYPP was premised on the Assumption that:

1. The child will benefit linguistically, culturally, socially and cognitively through the use of his/her mother tongue as the medium of instruction of his/her entire primary education.
2. The child's command of English will be improved considerably if he/she is taught English as a subject professionally as a second language throughout the primary education process.
3. Consequently, the child's personal development will be so enhanced that he/she becomes the most effective agent for the sustainable development of the state. (Afolayan, 1999:3).

Aim and objectives:

The main aim of the project was to develop and implement a coherent primary education that can equip the Yoruba child to become an exceedingly productive citizen of not only the Yoruba socio-cultural nation but also the entire Federal Republic of Nigeria as a political nation. Towards that end the project had the following five specific objectives:

1. To develop a primary education curriculum with an adequately strong surrender value, since primary education is terminal for the majority of Nigerian children.
2. To develop materials, together with appropriate methodology, for teaching the prepared curriculum effectively.

3. To use the Yoruba language as the medium of instruction throughout, in order to demonstrate that primary education, when given in the child's mother tongue rather than in a second or foreign language, is more effective and meaningful.
4. To teach the English language effectively as a second language through specialist teachers, and thereby provide an alternative approach (generally assumed to be more practicable and rewarding than the current practice) to the equipment of primary school products with a knowledge of English adequate for secondary education or appointment usually given to people of that level of formal education.
5. To evaluate the project continually in order to assess its success.

The project was sponsored by the Ford Foundation and the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and with the active collaboration of the Ministry of Education Western State of Nigeria. The project commenced in the 1969/70 academic year. Two sets of schools were selected for the project. The control group was made up of schools where English was used as the medium of instruction for all school subjects. The experimental group was made up of schools where Yoruba was the medium of instruction for all the school subjects including science and mathematics. The specialist teacher taught English as a subject on its own.

Available data from the study show that:

1. Of the two languages (English and Yoruba) that are school subjects today, Yoruba is the one that can be better acquired and consequently ensure real success of primary education for the Yoruba child (Afolayan, 1999:5)
2. Of the two languages (English and Yoruba) of formal education of the Yoruba child today, Yoruba is a more effective medium of primary education (Afolayan, 1999:5).
3. The project revealed the need for a rigorous teacher education program and a vibrant national language policy if languages in Nigeria are to become effective media of education.

In evaluating the SYPP all we can do is to salute the courage and foresight of the initiators and implementers of the project. The impact of the study was effective and immediate. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Education packaged the National Policy of Education (NPE). The NPE among its many merits recognized the primacy of language in the education of the Nigerian child as well as the catalytic role of the child's mother tongue as an instrument for life long learning and for actualizing the complete and perfect child. The language component of the NPE states that the child's mother tongue should be used as the language of instruction at the preschool level and during the first three years of the child's elementary education. Pride in the use of the Nigerian mother tongue has been enhanced and today in many Colleges of Education, University Institutes of Education and Faculties of Education, teacher educators competent in the use of the mother tongue in instructing the Nigerian child are being raised. Besides, a National Institute of Nigerian Languages has been specifically set up to oversee the use and development of Nigerian mother tongues fro the literacy empowerment of the generality of Nigerians. Today all over Nigeria interest in the production of suitable teaching and learning materials in the Nigeria mother tongues is on a steady increase.

The Communication Skills Project (COMSKIP)

One useful heritage, which the British colonial master left in Nigeria, is the English Language. Before independence, veteran and well-experienced teachers from Britain and some Nigerians who were trained in Britain taught English in Nigerian secondary schools and teacher training colleges. Thus at the dawn of independence, the standard of English in Nigerian schools and colleges was very high. However soon after independence, when British educators left Nigeria, the standard of English in Nigerian secondary schools and teacher training colleges began to decline. Unfortunately, no effective measures were put in place to arrest the decline. Thus by the early eighties, it was clear that the products of our secondary schools and teacher training colleges could no longer read or write fluently in English or their Nigerian mother tongues (Omojuwa, 1982, Abbe, 1984). By the middle of the eighties the falling standard of English assumed a crisis dimension. It became clear that even undergraduates in Nigerian Universities couldn't effectively receive and give information in English (Tinuoye, 1991 Onukaogu, 1989, Afolayan, 1984). Since English is the medium of instruction in Nigerian primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, it was felt that some urgent steps were needed at all levels to arrest the falling standard of English.

COMSKIP was an attempt to study the inability of Nigerian undergraduates to effectively receive and give information in English. It was set up to suggest ways and means by which the Nigerian undergraduate can be enabled to effectively and efficiently give and receive information in English. COMSKIP was packaged by the British Council and funded by the British Oversea Development Administration. The Nigerian University Commission supervised it. Thus we can say that COMSKIP was the first national attempt to study the role of the official second language English, regarding its efficacy as a medium of instruction in Nigerian Universities.

Virtually all Federal Universities were involved in the project. The project was divided into three zones. The Bayero University Kano was the centre for Federal Universities in the North, the University of Nigeria Nsukka was for the Universities in the East and the University of Ibadan the centre for those in the West. Each University had a project team and a project coordinator. All the project coordinators reported to the zonal coordinators and national coordinator who was initially based in the University of Ibadan and later in the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Many workshops were held at the University, zonal and national levels to examine issues in the teaching of Use of English - a communication skills course designed to empower undergraduates with effective and efficient skills for receiving and giving information in English. By the structure of the project a pretest was designed to be administered to students participating in the course in order to ascertain their competencies at the commencement and also to the end of the project. The project also afforded the various project coordinators the opportunity to visit the UK in order to observe how English for Specific and Academic Purpose is being designed, implemented, evaluated and renewed. COMSKIP was modeled to reflect the norms and practices that inform English for Specific and Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purpose (EAP). COMSKIP ended with an international conference in 1994.

There are mixed opinions regarding the outcome of COMSKIP (Onukaogu and Olowu, 1994). On the positive side, we can say that COMSKIP was the first initiative at bringing together the Nigerian academia in a collaborative research to examine the problems of English use in tertiary institutions in the country. COMSKIP shows that where teachers are exposed to current trends in communication studies, they perform better while their students improve considerably in their Use of English (Onukaogu, 1991).

The Unfortunate Derailing of COMSKIP

In spite of the many promises it held, COMSKIP was a colossal failure. Apart from the fact that no lasting edifice was left behind by COMSKIP, the English language competence of Nigerian undergraduates has continued to slide down more and more. Only recently, Professor B. Odejide one of the project leaders of COMSKIP lamented the inability of many graduates from Nigerian Universities to communicate fluently in English (Odejide, 2000).

Four reasons can be easily identified regarding why COMSKIP was ineffective. First, there was no concerted attempt by the planners of COMSKIP to involve the Nigerian teachers of communication skills in English - the Use of English (UOE) teachers in the designing and total implementation of COMSKIP. The British expert who designed the curriculum put in place a program that was conceived in Britain and implemented by British experts. There were no needs analyses before the commencement of the program. Thus the program was based on the speculated and not the actually perceived needs of the Nigerian undergraduate. As a matter of fact, the Nigerian undergraduate had no input at all in the design; implementation and evaluation of the project (see Onukaogu and Olowu 1994 for a very critical and subsequent evaluation of COMSKIP). Another factor that caused the failure of COMSKIP was the imposition of a British model of communication skills teaching without realizing that the Nigerian environment is not the same as the British. For instance, the model imported and installed from Britain was English for Specific Purposes and its two primary offshoots - English for Academic Purpose and English for Science and Technology. Onukaogu and Olowu (1994) have advanced some reasons why ESP is not a better alternative to the Nigerian program - OUE - which was already in use in all Universities in Nigeria. According to them:

> We are therefore unhappy that at the execution stage, the British Council consultants gave the impression that UOE is of lower status than ESP and its academic spin-off EAP. We shall advance at least two reasons to support our view. In the first place, it is not acceptable to us that at the end of the national workshop at Ibadan, the professional association for communication skills teachers that emerged was the Nigeria Association for Lecturers of English for Academic Purposes – NALEAP. This shows a preference for the British model-British Association of Lecturers for Academic Purposes (BALEAP). NALEAP is a disservice to UOE. We prefer the existence of a Nigerian Association of Lecturers for the Use of English – NALUOE. Second, the presentations during the workshops were basically oriented towards EAP. The consultants were ESP specialists. It is therefore not surprising that they did not hide their preference for EAP. Of the four books that were published by the project two of them CPS No.1

and CPS No.4 were basically publications on EAP. Finally, we observe that the emergent syllabus is an EAP Syllabus as CPS No. 4 clearly indicates.

We do not see the basis for the subtle replacement of UOE with EAP by COMSKIP. The problems that hamstring the UOE curriculum are not peculiar to the Nigerian communication skills program. For instance, College ESL suffers a similar fate as UOE. Commenting on these problems Gaies (1991) says:

> Even more problematic is the fact that in many institutions the ESL program is not a full partner in instructional policy-making and decision-making. The issue is not simply whether ESL coursework is credit bearing or not. It has to do in many cases with the very location and design of the program. It is often isolated from the academic sector by being placed under the administration of a continuing education program. It is often housed in an English department in which it suffers the stigma of being the poor relation in the family. It is viewed as something peripheral to the real work of the academy (Gaies, p. 33).

The Americans have not replaced their program with EAP. Rather they address the situation and seek pragmatic solutions to the problems in the light of their thorough understanding of them (Auerbach, 1991).

> We reject the change from UOE to EAP because such a change succumbs to the myth of transience. The myth, suggests that by putting into effect a particular program, curriculum or testing procedure, the problems will be addressed and higher education will be more able to resume real work. Furthermore, because such a myth shifts the responsibility of educating these students who may be at risk to a specific program or unit within an institution, faculties are not likely to share in the responsibility of dealing with our students' difficulties and needs, are not likely to look for ways to incorporate language, reading and writing into their courses. This, in turn, makes it difficult for these students to take on unfamiliar linguistic norms and conventions (Zamel, 1991, p.16). (As cited in Onukaogu and Olowu, 1994:154-155).

Two other factors were responsible for the ineffectiveness of COMSKIP. One of them is the non-inclusion of teacher development in the project. According to the project document.

> It is intended to carry out the above through improving resources in the Nigeria Federal Universities, and providing training both in the country and in Britain, on two levels-on the practical level for existing classroom Use of English teachers and on a more theoretical level, applied linguistics training for those working in departments (COMSKIP Project document, 1988, p. 1).

The issue of a teacher-education programme that should succeed the project in enhancing the professional and academic growth of UOE teachers was made an exclusion. See for example, 3.3.2 as the project document specifies.

> This project will not focus specifically on language teacher education, through many of those ultimately benefiting from communication skills development will become teachers of English and of other subjects (project Documents p.4).

Again, Onukaogu and Olowu (1994) in a rigorous evaluation of COMSKIP contend:

> We are not impressed that COMSKIP did not develop a sound and sustainable teacher education programme for UOE teachers. Our view is that teaching competence cannot be acquired by merely informing teachers of current trends in communication skills teaching.

As Jaggar has rightly observed:

> You must recognize that learning takes place from the inside out not outside in. Neither teachers nor those they teach change simply by giving them information by being told about theory and research or new approaches. Unfortunately, we often equate knowledge with information. Language and literacy instruction won't improve in our schools if we continue to hold on to the idea that all teachers need are more information and everything will get better. Information is necessary, but it is not a sufficient condition for change (Jaggar, 1989,p. 78).

Since we know that:

> When you get to the bottom line, teachers make or break a program. If they believe in what one is asked to do, if they are given opportunities to verbalize and resolve their professional conflicts, if they are supported rather than dictated to by the school leadership, and if they are sufficiently trained the program will succeed. If these ifs are not met interest in the program will stop outside the classroom door (Welsh, 1989, p. 67),

we feel that the non-development of a durable teacher education programme that would perpetuate the goals and objectives. (as cited in Onukaogu and Olowu, 1994:153-154)

The last factor that caused the derailing of COMSKIP was the haphazard manner in which the program was implemented. For instance, there was no rigorous collection of pretest and posttest data in order to ascertain the competencies of the subjects before, during and after intervention. There are thus no data to support any assertion that the apparent performances of subjects were attributable or non-attributable to COMSKIP. Besides, intervention was not persistent. Because of the incessant closure of Nigeria Universities during the intervention period, there were so many extraneous intervening variables, which made the data collected from the project suspect. The fact that available evidences in Nigerian Universities still point to the inability of the Nigeria undergraduate to receive and give information in English, indicates that the surrender value of COMSKIP was very minimal and generally ineffective.

Ineffectiveness of Nigerian MTS and ESL as Media for Learning and Instruction

There are a number of reasons why the languages in Nigeria are not effective as media for learning and teaching. First, there is the historical antecedent. When missionaries first came to Nigeria at the later part of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, they introduced English to the country. In addition, the English traders who came alongside with the missionaries used English in communicating with Nigerians and with

missionaries. Nigerians came to see English as the gateway to commerce and civilization. They not only resented their mother tongues, they also rebuffed the attempt of the missionaries to instruct them and their children via the mother tongue. Although, the missionaries saw the need to use the Nigerian mother tongues as the medium of instruction in the formal schools they introduced, their efforts were aborted by the colonial Gold Coast act of 1880 when the colonial administration insisted that only schools that use English as the medium of instruction would be grant - aided. Since the missionaries needed funds to meet the increasing demands for formal education of the indigenes, they had to jettison the use of the Nigerian mother tongues and resorted to the use of English for instruction in the formal school system.

We can therefore contend that from the early foundation stages of formal education in Nigeria, the Nigerian mother tongue was a lame duck to English and so did not stand any chance of being an effective instrument for teaching and learning in the Nigerian school system. Although, English was well received as an instrument for teaching and learning, there were four major factors that later made English and the Nigerian mother tongues non-effective as instruments for teaching and learning.

First, in the sixties after Nigerian attained its independence, the rising wave of nationalism in the country made Nigerians see English as a language of oppression and colonialism. Thus the momentum, which the colonial administration had initiated in the development of English, was not sustained. Second, the impression created by Nigerian educational planners immediately after independence was that everything must be done to enhance science, mathematics and technology in Nigeria. At that time Nigerian education planners did not realize the catalytic role language plays in the promotion of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, the art of inquiring and numeracy which are pivots of science, technology and mathematics. The ironical position taken by government and our educational planners in Nigeria in making monumental investments in the teaching of science, mathematics and technology without a corresponding investment in language and language education contributed in no small measures to the nose-diving of English from the very lofty position it held before independence. Thirdly, there has been this unfortunate methodology in which language teaching in Nigeria whether it is English or the Nigerian mother tongue did not have any synchronicity between language and literature. There is a separate syllabus for language and a separate one for literature.

Unfortunately, the language syllabus is given more prominence than the literature syllabus. Literature is seen as a mere appendage to language. Three things have compounded the non-synchronicity in the teaching of language and literature. First, language is taught disintegratively as listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, it is the rules of grammar that are emphasized. Little context is provided for use of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the context of relevancy and meaning. While our teachers assume that the learners would integrate what they have learnt disintegratively, the reality is that the learners never do. Secondly, the extensive use of literature is never promoted in our schools. For instance, while language is compulsory for all students in their terminal examination. Only a handful of students take literature in

their terminal examination. These students never get ready to read and write. In the light of the above reasons, there is no way that language as a medium of instruction can have a robust and vibrant development in our schools, colleges and tertiary institutions. The fourth factor that has crippled the development of language as the medium for teaching and learning is that in testing the language learning of our students, we disintegrate literature from language. Our testing procedures are not holistic, continuous, do not involve all the members of the language learning and teaching orchestra, are not systematic and do not involve teachers, learners and parents. We tend to emphasize the mastery of language usage more than language use in our testing.

The fifth factor which does not enhance the use of language as a medium for learning and teaching in Nigeria, is that Nigerian educational planners have only until recently come to realize that language is indispensable to the attainment of sustainable national development. According to Onukaogu (1994), information dissemination, the promotion of market vàlues, the art of good governance and effective resource, renewal and management, which are indices for the attainment of sustainable national development, cannot be actualized where the generality of people in a nation is illiterate. The lack of awareness of the catalytic role of language to the attainment of sustainable national development has never given language development the importance it deserves.

Finally, our policy makers have failed to realize that the teachers' factor is indispensable to the promotion of language for teaching and learning. No matter current achievements in science and technology, there can be no substitute for the language teacher. It is ironical that so far the foundation for language teacher education is very shaky. As long as the language teacher is not adequately motivated and adequately trained to be effective, so long will it be difficult to facilitate the use of language for teaching and learning.

Conclusion

We have drawn attention to the mix between the mother tongue and the second language. We have tried to argue that the complexity of the linguistic map of Nigeria is such that what constitutes a mother tongue to a group of Nigerians might be a foreign language to others. Taking the case of the mother tongue, we described the six-year primary project, which was a spirited attempt to examine the validity of the mother tongue as an instrument for teaching and learning. While the six-year primary project can be considered as a great success and a significant landmark in the history of language development in Nigeria, the same can not be true of COMSKIP. COMSKIP a lifeline that was put in place by the British Council in collaboration with the Nigerian Universities Commission and with generous funding from the British Oversea Development Administration was as we have pointed out a colossal failure. We also drew attention to some of the factors that have made it impossible for the Nigerian mother tongue and English as a second language, the official second language of Nigeria, to be effective instruments for language learning and teaching.

We would like to suggest some urgent steps that must be taken if the Nigerian language and English are to become effective instruments for teaching and learning. First, there must be a political will that must recognize the importance and centrality of language for development. State and Federal governments must invest money that can promote research in the development and use of Nigerian languages and English for national development. Such institutes as the National Institute for Nigerian Languages should be adequately supported and funded to undertake and coordinate research in the use of Nigerian languages. They should be adequately funded to extensively disseminate and publicize such studies in English as a second language in Nigeria. Reading Research Centres for instances should be set up in our Universities. We need to find out what approaches and methodologies can be used to maximize teaching and learning in our schools and colleges. We need to link up with scholars from other parts of the world in order to ascertain how best they addressed their own problems. We then can learn from their experiences.

Finally, we want to add that any language approach that does not recognize the complementarities of the home, society and the school is bound to fail. We therefore hold the belief that for ESL studies to thrive and prosper in Nigeria, the collaboration between the home, the society and the school must be initiated and continuously fostered. Furthermore, any approach that ignores the centrality of the teacher in language teaching and learning is bound to founder and miscarry. That is why sound education programs that would lead to the production of very competent teachers must inform the production of qualified teachers for English as a Second Language and mother tongue teaching and learning.

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